



SEATTLE PARKS
AND RECREATION

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Summer 2005

WALKING THE TALK

Note from Ken Bounds

Parks staff continue to do great work making our urban environment a better place to live. We're into the third year of operating our Environmental Management System (EMS), a systematic approach to improving and tracking Parks-wide environmental performance. In 2004 there were just over 100 items on our EMS work plan. We either completed or went beyond expectations on 77% of the targets. Here are a few highlights:

- As part of the Green Cleaning program, all our facility custodians switched to using cleaning products that reduce their, and visitors', exposure to harmful chemicals.
- Golf met its pesticide reduction goal for 2004 of 20%, and in fact the reduction was 21%. We also started public recycling at all four golf courses.
- We completed 14 Pro Parks Levy-funded projects and several major maintenance projects with significant sustainable features. High Point Community Center received LEED certification, and we anticipate that Yesler Community Center will receive certification as well.
- We doubled our urban teen environmental education program, Outdoor Opportunities (formerly TREC), to include a program site at Golden Gardens.
- The Seattle Aquarium successfully tackled specimen collection strategies, began using "Best Choices" seafood for animal food, and started tracking water usage and conservation methods and office paper usage.
- We bought two electric trucks and an electric car for Magnuson Park, and Aquatics replaced three two-cycle outboard motors with four-cycle models resulting in less gas consumption and less air and water pollution.
- Mayor Nickels formed the Green Seattle Partnership (GSP) between the City and the Cascade Land Conservancy, with the goal of restoring 2,500 acres of park forest lands by the year 2024.

For a complete listing of the highlights from 2004, please visit the Parks Inweb at: <http://inweb/parks/>

Thanks for all your hard work!

Our EMS team members are **Woody Wilkinson, Duane Penttila, Leila Wilke, Richard Gelb, Lori Chisholm, Susan Golub, Don Allen, Jodi Sinclair, Barb DeCaro, and Paul Wilkinson.**

Ken

The Buzz on Battery Recycling

As of 2003, the State Department of Ecology (DOE) requires all city staff to handle ALL batteries as 'Universal Waste' and recycle them. In Parks, staff are to collect and recycle all batteries at each facility and deliver them to the Warehouse, and to recycle cell phones and their batteries through the Telecommunications Office.

We have now provided facility custodians with two containers for battery collection, one for rechargeable batteries and one for all other batteries. We've placed posters in all our facilities reminding staff to recycle batteries, and we will measure our success by issuing annual reports that compare the weight of batteries collected through the warehouse



Parks Custodians get ready for Battery Recycling

with the weight of those purchased.

In 1996, the EPA Office of Regulatory Enforcement issued the Battery Act, requiring that rechargeable batteries like Nickel-Cadmium (Ni-Cd) and small sealed lead-acid batteries (SSLA) be recycled, and that batteries containing mercury be phased out. In 2000, the State DOE included all spent batteries as "universal waste," subject to special collection and handling. As of 2003, all batteries used by City departments are regulated when they become waste; according to Washington Dangerous Waste Regulations WAC 173-303, they are either to be recycled as "Universal Waste" or disposed as hazardous waste, but it is not legal to dispose of them as trash.

So, what's the buzz on batteries? Recycle! If your facility needs containers and posters, please call **Dawn Blanch** at 733-9703, or e-mail her at dawn.blanch@seattle.gov

www.seattle.gov/papercuts is the Place to go for Paper Saving Strategies

In 2003, City employees used nearly 67,500,000 sheets of copier/printer paper – stacked up that’s higher than 34 Space Needles! Making paper is resource-intensive (wood, water, energy) and a big polluter of our waterways and the air we all breathe.



Mayor Nickels has approved a three step approach to improve our paper use:

1. Switch to 100% recycled paper
2. Reduce paper use by 30% by end of 2006
3. Increase recycling rates

These three strategies will save 5,800 trees, 6.3 million BTUs of energy, 876,000 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions, 376,000 pounds of solid waste and 21,150 pounds of water pollutants EVERY YEAR.

Top Ten Tips for Saving Paper

1. Think before you print and copy.
2. Double-side all documents.
3. Save and store important e-mail electronically.
4. Use the “Track Changes” function to edit electronically.
5. Hold Green Meetings.
6. Increase the font size on your computer display to make documents easier to read.
7. Use e-mail to send documents, rather than printing and faxing them.
8. Use electronic letterhead instead of reprinting it.
9. Give paper a “second chance”! Re-use one-sided paper for drafts.
10. Adjust document margins to reduce the number of pages printed.

Made Paradise, and Tore Down a Parking Lot!

In 2005 a goal of the Planning and Development Team is to remove 18 acres of impervious surfaces through acquisitions and site improvements. For some perspective, 18 acres (or 784,080 square feet) is an area slightly smaller than Gas Works Park or Kubota Garden.

What is an impervious surface and why should we care?

An impervious surface is a constructed surface such as a rooftop, sidewalk, road, or parking lot. In cities and towns, impervious surfaces have replaced roots, leaf litter, and forest canopies that were once available to absorb and recycle rain. Where rain was able to percolate into the ground and infiltrate to the water table or contribute to creek and lake base flows, now most rain runs off these impervious surfaces directly into our creeks, lakes and Puget Sound.

Our existing creeks are not able to handle the added storm waters effectively. What had been small rain showers, which often never reached the streams as overland flow, now can result in bank full floods (where water runs over natural banks) or worse. Another problem is that during dry periods, pollutants build up on impervious surfaces; when it rains, polluted water quickly runs into our waterways, resulting in nonpoint water pollution problems (those caused by runoff rather than by direct entry of a pollutant into a body of water).

Some examples of finished or upcoming pavement removal projects include the Coleman School and Magnolia Elementary parking lots, the runway at Magnuson Park, and the new Ballard Commons Park now under construction.

Partnership Restores Licton Springs

Invasive plants such as Reed Canary Grass and Blackberry have felt at home in much of Licton Springs Park over the past two or more decades. But over the past nine years native plants and northwest trees have made a comeback there. These improvements wouldn’t have been possible without the enthused community group led by volunteer Liz Kearns, and her (latest) team of Parks staff: Crew Chief **Don Allen**, Senior Gardener **Rosellen Brittenham**, Packer Team **Elone Tupou** and **Steve Reynolds**, Mower Operator **Tom Knorr**, and others.

Liz, who was the first recipient of the statewide Urban Forest Stewardship Award, and the Friends of Licton Springs Park have performed monthly work parties for the past three years focused on removing invasive plants and planting new trees—something Parks could not commit to on its own. In



Don Allen and Liz Kearns at Licton Springs Park

return, the staff in North Central Park Resources and our Conservation Corps commit some of their time to supporting the group’s efforts through expert advice, working with community partners, coordinating supplies, preparing and cleaning work sites, building trails, and maintaining the rest of the park as a formal landscape where the greater community can gather, learn, and play.

The partnership these folks have formed represents the vision of Mayor Nickels’ Green Seattle Partnership by brining people together to achieve a goal greater than what each could accomplish on their own. This year, the GSP (a 20 year, 2,500 acre effort) will be one more tool Parks uses to carry out its EMS commitment to “Protect and Restore Ecological Function in Parks.” At Licton Springs, one of 18 GSP sites this year, that effort will mean about \$5,000 to support additional volunteer management efforts and other restoration work. In total, it represents our future as an emerald city.

Walking The Talk is published three times a year for the employees of Seattle Parks and Recreation. Our goal is to inspire us all by highlighting the people and programs that make Seattle Parks a leader in Environmental Stewardship. We welcome your input – please send us story ideas, kudos, anecdotes, and photos about activities you or co-workers are doing to help make our urban environment healthier. Ideas or questions? Contact us at parkses@seattle.gov, or call Leila Wilke at 206/733-9707.

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